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COUNTRY Colombia

DATE DISTR. 9 November 1948

SUBJECT Activities of the Leftist Members of the
Liberal Party

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REPORT NO. XXXXXXXXXX

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1. On 16 October 1948 the leftist Liberal Congressmen held a meeting in the Bogota offices of their newspaper Jornada to determine the attitude to be adopted towards the schism within the Liberal Party. Among those present were Francisco Jose Chaux, Diego Luis Cordoba, Hernando Restrepo Botero, and Jorge Uribe Marquez. Senator Cordoba, a negro and a native of the Department of El Choco, violently attacked the National Union Government of President Mariano Ospina Perez and classed Liberal Minister of Government Dario Echandia as a traitor to his Party. Cordoba jubilantly reported on the progress made by the Movimiento Popular Liberal (MPL) in Bogota and proposed that it be extended to cover the 800 municipalities in Colombia. He also advocated that MPL members be armed and trained so that they could seize control of the country, if the opportunity arose. 25X1A
[REDACTED] Comment. Senator Cordoba was under arrest for some time because of his participation in the 9 April uprising.)
2. Uribe Marquez, one of the founding members of the Communist Party of Colombia, who is now a leftist Liberal Congressman, then pointed out the fact that the Liberal Party, and especially the leftist Liberal strength, is concentrated in the larger cities, while the Conservative Party's strength is in the rural areas. He maintained that an active and aggressive campaign along the lines advocated by the late Jorge Eliecer Gaitan would win the support of many farm laborers, who are nominal members of the Conservative Party.
3. Restrepo Botero continued the meeting by reporting that the MPL had achieved a tremendous success in Bogota and its environs and that it had taken away popular support from such Liberal leaders as Echandia and Eduardo Santos. He mentioned the conflict between the Tropical Oil Company and its labor union and stated that the MPL was well aware of the fact that the conflict was caused not only by labor friction, but also by patriotic desire of the people to free the petroleum resources from foreign exploitation. He said that any agreement reached between Colombian labor and the foreign oil companies would be a truce rather than a permanent solution of the conflict. Restrepo Botero vigorously supported the proposals made by Cordoba asking that the MPL play a militant role.
4. Chaux welcomed the suggestions presented by Cordoba for the formation of MPL groups in the municipalities and then proceeded to outline a plan of organization. He said that each municipality should have a leader, who would report to a Departmental leader, who would in turn report to the MPL headquarters in

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This document is hereby regraded to CONFIDENTIAL in accordance with the letter of 16 October 1963 from the Director of Central Intelligence to the Chief of the United States.

Next Review Date: 2003

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NO CHANGE in class

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Memorandum, 4 Apr 77

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25X1A Bogota. He praised the work done by Gabriel Uribe Munoz and Arturo Besada in organizing and arming the MPL in Bogota and recommended that the same procedures should be followed in other municipalities. Chaux openly admitted that he would accept the nomination as presidential candidate of the leftist Liberal faction, declaring that the MPL should adopt and foster the idea of class struggle. (Comment. This idea is contrary to the long-established policy of the Liberal Party.) He added that Dr. Carlos Lozano y Lozano had attempted to persuade him to refuse to accept the candidacy, but that he, as the logical successor to Gaitan, neither could nor would refuse to run in the 1950 elections. (Comment. The left-wing faction of the Liberal Party has become far more violent against the moderate faction. The handbill which was distributed by the Comando Nacional del Pueblo merely showed the publicized facet of this extreme leftist organization, which is engaged in subversive activities. Chaux and other leftist Liberal leaders would attempt to crush the moderate faction, if they did not fear that a declared intra-Party conflict would enable the Conservative Party to win in the forthcoming presidential and congressional elections, or at least would cause many moderate Liberals to adhere to the Conservative Party. Although no concrete information is available as to whether the leftist Liberals are prepared to force their views on the Party as a whole, it is believed to be significant that they are taking steps to arm MPL members and to organize a quasi-military striking force.)

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